

April 18, 2008
TPERF Conference

A Simplified Articulation Model:
A New Process for Equity and Access

We heard earlier today about many innovative programs that are in place to help our children link their secondary to post secondary education and to become a more competitive in our global workplace. We've heard about dual credit, P-16 programs. Looking at the handout provided as I make these remarks may help in conveying my thoughts.

Today, I would like to focus on the need to expand these models to serve all students. We know that in Texas (handouts):

- 53 % of the High school graduates enroll in college
- Of those who attend a university, 74 % continue for their sophomore year and
- And of those who enter a cc, 45% remain for their sophomore year.
- At the end of three years, 18% of the high graduates entered college graduate.

So what lies ahead for the other 82% of our graduates?

- Do they work for awhile then return to college?
 - Our stats indicate that many do return to college since the average age for cc students is approximately 29.
- Or do they enter a job where on-the-job training is adequate?
- Or do they face low wages in a low skill occupation?

Do these statistics tell us that our education is not serving all students?

- Are students entering higher education without a career focus?
- Are students entering higher education with entrance scores who lack the basic skills in mathematics, reading, and writing to enter courses required for a degree?

We could argue that the 20% of the student population that completes a bachelor's degree is about what our job market demands and this figure has stayed relatively the same over the last several decades. But the demand for high-skill workers with more than a high school diploma but less than a bachelor's degree is projected to be 60%-90%.

This is the population we need to better serve. In 1990, the first Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, released, America's Choice: high skills or low wages! The 1990 report anticipated

that low skill jobs would go to foreign countries, it was never imagined that high skill jobs would be outsourced as well. And for low wages!!!

Last year, their follow-up report was released, Tough Choices or Tough Times, which is a call-to-arms saying that the reforms of the 90s were not near enough to meet the challenge. This report outlines a systemic problem that requires major change now for us to compete in the world.

This report also projects a future with a zero net growth from America-born natives. All the new net growth will come from immigrant growth and most from undereducated populations.

So this may be the year when we must examine state policy regarding students' movement between educational institutions and the transfer credits gained through dual credit at the high school to community colleges then on to universities.

We have tried to reach this population since the mid 80's. First, secondary and post-secondary institutions were required to develop articulated career pathways. Then Tech Prep was introduced as a federal program.

Tech-Prep was originally conceived to improve the academic and technical skills of the "middle majority" of high school students—those who complete high school but most likely do not earn four-year college degrees.

While Tech-Prep programs have been in place over 10 years, this initiative still does not reach the critical mass in the "middle majority" of high school students. Limited data is available to show outcomes from Tech Prep students. But we do know that in most states, a relatively small number of community college can be documented as having "completed a high school Tech-Prep experience." A recent US Dept of Ed report states that about 10% of high school students participate in Tech-Prep and less than 2% (1.7 %) of post secondary students.

In New York, for example:

Number of Community Colleges	114
Number of 12 grade students	174K

In 4 yrs, TPAD completers 00-04 509

This data shows that the movement from secondary, to a community college and then to a university is not working. Agreements most often link two institutions, high school to community colleges, or high schools to universities, and these agreements are specific to the institutions that developed them. The process is cumbersome and costly.

So let's look at some of the challenges that serve as barriers to career preparation in high schools:

First, up until now, we have not had a statewide common focus, agreements are developed locally and lack mobility across the state, methods for awarding college credit vary from college to college and some universities do not want to award this credit.

Course alignment and articulation remain problematic because of the vast number of courses. And federal and state law asks for "programs of study," do you know where these programs are?

For example: if we look at the one of the 16 career clusters, Architecture and Construction, one can demonstrate the magnitude of the problem. First you have a list of the secondary course choices available, about 27 courses, and then look at the THECB courses available in this cluster, there are about 571 courses. How do you build a program from this?

Faculty agreement has been difficult to achieve on the comparability of courses taught at different institutions

Linkages are not systematic, nor are they recognized across the state by community colleges and universities.

No mandate exists for technical content that should be taught to all students enrolled in secondary institutions.

Public and higher education systems operate independently of each other, each with its own governance and financing systems, politics, goals, and cultures.

In other words we need a statewide plan for career and technology education like we have for our core academic curriculum. That plan is working very well. Why? Because the state gives all community colleges and universities guidance.

Things to consider:

Instead of improving the system "one" policy direction at a time, can we create and nurture an "entire infrastructure of policies and practices" that link and build into a comprehensive articulation plan?

Can we base the strength of the plan on recognizing the nature of student movement through postsecondary education?

Can schools provide broad clear pathways that do not result in training students in narrow fields that often have a short life?

Can we build a critical mass of students with the same background academically AND technically, replacing silos of learning with a broad career and technology core at all schools?

We do this in English, Math and Science, it's been done it with academics, it can be done with CT.

Allow me to ask you to imagine three very different scenarios based on a model that, over the last 15 years, my mentor and colleague, Dr. Faye Murphy, and I have continued to study and observe.

Imagine Any Texas High School, USA

- A broad career and technology core curriculum is established in four areas
- This core feeds into a cluster of associate degrees
- This core is strong enough, and broad enough to offer on every high school campus in Texas
- This core articulates into all community colleges, and all 16 career clusters
- Students are beginning an AA degree w/ 6-12 hours credit
- All schools offer the core in all 4 areas

Imagine Any Texas Community College, USA

- Instead of the low numbers of high school graduates entering with credits in narrow fields - vast numbers of students are entering with the same strong, broad background in 4 main AA areas
- Broad backgrounds are expediting student entry into multiple AA degrees
- The process is simple and consistent
- Faculty acceptance of these students is high

Imagine Any Texas 4-year College, USA

- AA degree graduates are now viewed as a powerful feeder system for universities
- Texas Two-Step enrollment increases
- AA students of all ages, especially older students, understand how to re-enter higher ed. and continue lifelong learning
- Inverted BAT and BAAS degree programs become more widely completed and accepted
- Professors and upper-classmen have more time freed up for genuine scholarship and research

And as Texas moves forward in reforming CTE, let's look at what states are doing:

In **Florida**, institutions are “rewarded” for student advancement and progress. In the 1990’s, Florida implemented performance funding structures that “paid” institutions for student completion of programs and continuous enrollment in higher learning.

Last fall, **New Jersey** passed into law that an associate degree awarded by a community college must be totally transferable and count as the first two years toward a bachelor’s degree at any state public institution.

In closing, we have heard today about the promising new programs to help prepare our children for the future. But with only 20% of our young people graduating with a four-year degree, how can we expand these programs immediately to serve the other 80% of our population?

The proposals laid out today would simplify articulation process, maximize student equity and access, provide state and taxpayer efficiency AND help students reach their highest achievement level as they prepare to enter a skilled workforce that will improve our economy. I believe in Tech Prep, but we need to reshape the way we do business. Until we have a critical mass of participants we will struggle with a lack of support and involvement.

One thing is clear that if we continue to have narrow career pathways and we will continue to have confusion.

So, can we create a new more efficient progression through the system?

We must.